

Message Text

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15
ACTION PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5863
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDAO VALLETA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3587

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, KU, PR
SUBJ: COMMENCEMENT OF MIRAGE DELIVERIES TO KUWAIT

REF: USDAO MALTA 200835Z JUL 76

1. EMBASSY CONFIRMS ARRIVAL IN KUWAIT ABOUT 22 JULY OF SIX
FRENCH MIRAGE F-1 AIRCRAFT, WHICH FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCE NOTES
ARE FIRST ARRIVAL SOF 20 SUCH AIRCRAFT SOLD TO KUWAIT. FRENCH
SOURCE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO EMBOFF IN DISCUSSION OF MIRAGE
SALE:

A. SIX FRENCH CIVILIAN TECHNICANS FROM MIRAGE MANUFACTURER
(DASSAULT) ARE IN KUWAIT TO HELP MAINTAIN MIRAGES AFTER THEY
ARRIVE. WHILE KUWAITIS HAVE HIRED THEIR SERVICES FOR ONLY ONE
YEAR, BOTH DASSAULT AND FRENCH EMBASSY BELIEVE THAT TECHNICIANS'
SERVICES WILL HAVE TO BE EXTENDED IN ORDER TO KEEP MIRAGES FLYING.
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DASSAULT HAS LITTLE FAITH IN KUWAITIS' ABILITY TO MAINTAIN

MIRAGES ADEQUATELY. (COMMENT: LOCAL USMC AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PROJECT OFFICER HAS OBSERVED NINE FRENCH TECHNICANS. PROJECT OFFICER, LESS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT KUWAITI MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY, BELIEVES KUWAITIS COULD MAINTAIN MIRAGES ADEQUATELY, ALBEIT TAKING MORE TIME TO DO SO.)

B. THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT KUWAITI PILOTS TRAINED TO FLY ALL MIRAGES. (COMMENT: USMC PROJECT OFFICER DISAGREES HERE, NOTING THAT WHILE KUWAITI PILOT-AIRCRAFT RATIO DOES NOT APPROACH TYPICAL US RATIOS OF 2 OR 2.5 TO 1, KUWAIT DO HAVE AT LEAST 20 MIRAGE-QUALIFIED PILOTS.)

C. KUWAITIS SEEM ELATED OVER MIRAGE DELIVERIES BUT HAVE NOT MOVED VERY FAR IN ESTABLISHING ORDERLY LOGISTICAL SYSTEM IN TIME FOR RECEIPT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE AIRCRAFT.

D. MIRAGE SALE, LIKE OTHER FRENCH SALES TO KUWAIT (PUMA AND GAZELLE HELICOPTERS), CALLS FOR NO FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE, NOT ONLY BECAUSE THE KUWAITIS WANT TO AVOID INCREASING FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE BUT BECAUSE FRENCH FIND THAT DEALS FROM WHICH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT KEEPS RELATIVELY DISTANT CAUSE LESS BILATERAL FRICTION.

2. LOCAL USMC AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PROJECT OFFICER NOTES THAT ALL IS NOT SWEETNESS AND LIGHT IN MIRAGE DEAL. KAF STAFF IS CONCERNED BECAUSE IT HAS NOT YET RECEIVED ANY ORDNANCE NOR REPAIR AND TEST EQUIPMENT TO KEEP MIRAGES FLYING. ALSO, AL SALEM (KUWAIT WEST) AIRFIELD WEST OF JAHRA, FROM WHICH ALL FRENCH AIRCRAFT WERE INTENDED TO OPERATE, IS NOT READY FOR THEM. IN MEANTIME, THEY ARE BEING PUT ON ALREADY OVERCROWDED FLIGHT LINE AT MILITARY AIRFIELD (KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL) ADJACENT TO MAIN CIVILIAN TERMINAL. IT APPEARS THAT US A-4 AIRCRAFT, DELIVERIES OF WHICH SCHEDULED TO BEGIN JANUARY 1977, ALSO WILL WIND UP ON THIS FLIGHT LINE BECAUSE OF LAGGING AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION ELSEWHERE.

3. MIRAGE ARRIVAL MADE HEADLINES IN KUWAIT WHEN MINISTER OF DEFENSE VISITED AIRFIELD AND WELCOMED KUWAITI PILOTS WHO HAD FLOWN AIRCRAFT FROM FRANCE.
MAESTRONE

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